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Man, 23 stone, criticises rules after losing NHS funding for weight loss jabs

'It's a massive amount of money out of budget, I can't really afford it but I can't afford to be without it'

NEWS By **Taite Johnson** Audience and Trending Writer

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Aled Thomas now has to pay for his medication costing hundreds a month (Image: Richard Swingler)

A man who has been receiving weight-loss injections Mounjaro on the NHS has criticised the rules after funding for the medication was withdrawn.

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Aled Thomas, who lost just over 20kg in two years, said the injections had allowed him to see "improvements not only in my weight, but also in my overall wellbeing and confidence."

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Throughout his life, the Penarth man's weight has fluctuated. In September, 2024, weighing 169kgs (around 26 stone), Aled considered going under the knife to help with his obesity and spoke to the NHS Wales specialist weight management team about undergoing bariatric surgery.

Bariatric surgery makes the stomach smaller so it feels fuller sooner and less food is eaten. The main types of bariatric surgery are gastric bypass, gastric band, gastric balloon and sleeve gastrectomy. *Stay informed on the latest health news by signing up to **our newsletter here***

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The NHS website states: "Gastric bypass, gastric band and gastrectomy weight loss surgery are all done by a surgeon using keyhole surgery. Endoscopic sleeve gastroplasty is done by passing a flexible tube (endoscope) into your mouth and down to your stomach.

"All these types of weight loss surgery are done while you're under general anaesthetic."

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After speaking with specialists, Aled decided he felt the surgery was too invasive and would be too drastic. He decided to try weight-loss injection Wegovy instead.

Wegovy suppresses appetite and slows digestion. Aled used the medication for almost two years before consulting with his doctors and transitioning to a similar injection, Mounjaro in November, 2025.

Since 2024, Aled's weight has fallen 20kgs from 169 kgs to 147kgs (around 23 stone). He says it is the most effective weight loss method the 32-year-old has tried. However the weight loss is only equivalent to around 12% of his bodyweight over two years.

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In Wales, weight-loss medication such as Wegovy and Mounjaro are only available on the NHS through specialist weight management services. They are only available for a patients who meet specific health criteria and when the patient agrees to follow a calorie-controlled diet and take physical exercise, as advised by UK medications body NICE. The UK medications body estimates around 186,000 people in Wales could meet the eligibility criteria.

To qualify, patients would need to have a BMI over over $35kg/m^2$ and weight-related health conditions (comorbidities). If a patient loses less than 5% of their body weight within six months, there is a clause in the NICE guidance to ask medics to reconsider whether to continue providing treatment.

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro) costs from £133 for a low dose of 2.5mg for four weeks, to £333 for a high dose of 12.5mg fo four weeks.

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Aled now pays for his Mounjaro privately. It has cost him more than £1,000 in four months.

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Aled has been on weight loss medication for over two years (Image: Richard Swingler)

He said: "It's a shame, why stop something that is working. But I know that the NHS is under stress and is only financially able to support two years.

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"It's a massive amount of money out of budget, I can't really afford it but I can't afford to be without it."

He added: "I believe the medication is working because I have been able to lose weight consistently and maintain healthier habits while taking it.

"It has helped reduce my appetite and cravings, making it easier to control portion sizes and make better food choices. As a result, I have seen clear improvements not only in my weight, but also in my overall wellbeing and confidence.

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"I believe I should remain on the medication long term because obesity is a chronic condition, and the treatment has been effective for me.

"Since stopping previous medication led to difficulties maintaining progress, continuing treatment gives me the best chance of sustaining the health improvements I have achieved and avoiding regaining the weight."

Aled is now calling for the new Welsh Government to make the medication available long term for patients rather than only for two years as he believes obesity should be recognised as a long-term chronic health condition requiring ongoing support.

"Healthcare in Wales should be based on medical need, not on who can afford hundreds of pounds every month," he said.

"I hope the new government will recognise that obesity treatment should not simply stop after an arbitrary period of time if the medication is helping patients maintain healthier lives."

The Welsh Government said: "We want to ensure that the people of Wales have the means and the opportunity to live healthier and happier lives.

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